

diffidence or hesitation of the beginner. Tales are still told in Wycombe of that famous first speech from the portico of the Red Lion. The youthful orator was now at the height of his dandyism, and his 'curls and ruffles' played no small part in the election. Standing on the top of the porch beside the figure of the lion, with his pale face set off by masses of jet-black hair and his person plentifully adorned with lace and cambric, he must have seemed to the spectators better fitted for his *rdle* of fashionable novelist than for that of strenuous politician. Great, then, was their surprise when this 'popinjay,' as a hostile newspaper called him, began to pour forth a torrent of eloquence with tremendous energy of action and in a voice that carried far along the High Street. He had an instinct for the dramatic effects which hold the attention of a mob. 'When the poll is declared, I shall be there,' he exclaimed, according to a Wycombe tradition, pointing to the head of the lion, *and my opponent will be there,' pointing to the tail. By the admission even of the opposite party the speech was a complete success and his popularity with the crowd was thenceforth assured.

In the days of unreformed constituencies, however, elections were not to be won by popularity alone. The official Whigs and Reformers of course opposed him, and their county organ¹ gave him a first taste of that malignant and rancorous abuse of which he was to have such full measure throughout his political career and which, a certain cynical truculence on his own part no doubt did much to provoke. The Tory organ,² on the other hand, welcomed him as an independent in preference to the official Whig, and gave him a qualified blessing. He had placed his interests in the hands of one Nash, the local representative of the great county magnate, the Duke of Buckingham, whose son, Lord Chandos, was the leader of the Buckinghamshire Tories; and though Disraeli

i The *Bucks Gazette*.

* T^ Sucks

